Rather than Crashing, Console Gaming is Changing

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In the late 1970's, console gaming experienced a crash in which many thought it would not return. However, console gaming not only returned, but after 30 years it has become a fast selling form of entertainment. Even with gaming increasingly succeeding there are those who believe an end is coming. According to Jeremy Parish (2015), "Op-Ed: Can Console Gaming Save Itself?", the research and ideas that he presents suggests that the low number of sales, portable gaming competitions, and the lack of corporate research in new technologies that console gaming will not survive. Parish (2015) suggests that the PlayStation 4, in the eighth console generation, is the only console putting up respectable sales numbers and that PC gaming is the main threat to console gaming because the hardware is more advanced than a console. However, the research in this article is not entirely true. With console gaming thriving in sales more than any moment in history and new technologies emerging it appears that a console gaming shift is coming soon rather than a console gaming crash.

Console gaming is speeding ahead in popularity with each passing year. Taylor (2015) mentions a study by the Entertainment Software Association (ESA) that found console gaming is more popular than other platforms, including the rising trend of mobile gaming. "In the ESA's study, 68% of respondents reported that they play games on a console, next to only 53% on a smartphone" (Taylor, 2015, para. 15). The eighth console generation has pushed the popularity of console gaming to an extreme that foretells Xbox One and PlayStation 4 may overtake the PlayStation 2 and its 150 million plus console sales.

Sales are pushing boundaries with every new console generation. However, Parish suggests that console gaming sales are very low in this eighth console generation despite the fact

that console gaming has become the fastest growing form of entertainment with hundreds of developers employing tens of thousands of employees. In the year 2012, the 8th console generation began with Nintendo Wii U and continued in 2013 with Xbox One and PlayStation 4. This eighth console generation has now become the fastest selling console generation of all time, spawning sales that tower above all previous console generations. D'Angelo (2013) stated that in 2012, 42% of total gaming sales were for console gaming, totaling $28 billion as the fastest growing form of entertainment. D'Angelo's article is a summary of the seventh console generation, which contains the Xbox 360, Nintendo Wii, and PlayStation 3's total sales by 2013 and how the current eighth console generation is expected to surpass all previous console generations. "As a whole the video game industry is on track to become the biggest entertainment sector" (D'Angleo, 2013, para. 5). As the PlayStation 4 leads the charge with 20.2 million units sold as of May/June 2015 (DualShockers and Sarkar, 2015), Peckham (2014) states a similar notion, that the PlayStation 4 and Xbox One are continuing to set records as their sales launch continues past their first year. The eighth console generation is not only setting new records in sales, but in technology as well.

      With the eighth console generation introducing virtual reality again, it looks as though technology is also pushing boundaries. Parish believes that PC gaming is overpowering console gaming because console corporations are not putting out new technology to combat against PC and portable gaming. Corporate console giants, Microsoft and Sony are noticing the increasing trend of portable gaming and their answer to this competition is through a means that will allow the gamer to experience games in a new way, virtual reality headsets. Microsoft's Hololens and Sony's Project Morpheus may be a year or two from public release, but during E3 2015 both showed promise and are being shown off at large console gaming conferences for the remainder

of the year. Microsoft's Hololens during the Xbox E3 presentation demonstrated a stimulating new form of game play with the game, Minecraft. The result was without a doubt a thunderous applause from the audience as people both present at E3 and around the world online watched as a castle in the game shot up out of a table 3-dimensionally as if playing with Legos. Stuart (2015), stated in an interview with Kudo Tsunoda, Microsoft's Corporate Vice-President, Tsunoda commented that there will be a refined sense of intimacy in games when players' heroes interact with their homes through play with Hololens. It appears that technologies in the 8th console generation are producing new forms of gaming that show corporate giants are indeed projecting new technologies to keep console gaming successful.

For years consoles have been made with prototype technologies, forcing designers to adapt to new practices. However with the Xbox One and the PlayStation 4, common CPU and Ram parts were chosen to provide an easy approach for developers to create their projects. Once again, Parish believes that console gaming will not succeed because console games have reached their end and cannot progress further. According to IGN (2013) Mark Cerny, awardee of the Game Developers Choice Award, and lead system architect for the PlayStation 4 stated that the PlayStation 4 was created by developers, for developers so that they can achieve their dreams in creating the games they have always dreamed of creating. In attempt to spark an emotional response from the audience, Mark Cerny stated that the quintessential part of gaming, joy of play, PlayStation 4 owners would undoubtedly experience a more emotional journey in gaming as the PlayStation 4's life continues.

Console gaming has become a huge factor in the entertainment sector that suggests a crash is highly unlikely. The eighth console generation has produced record shattering sales as each month passes. By using common hardware designers are able to create their dream games

finally without a large amount of worry if the technology can keep up. With record sales, new

hardware and software, and virtual reality console gaming is not heading towards a crash,

rather it is approaching a significant change in the way console games are to be interacted with.

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